

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

Bonn
August 27, 1959

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS VON BRENTANO

Both before and after Chancellor Adenauer's luncheon, I had the opportunity of talking to von Brentano for at least an hour and a half. During that time we covered 1) the Algerian situation (see memorandum of conversation with Ambassador Greve); 2) relations between Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia; 3) the thinking of the German Government on a long-range solution to the Berlin problem.

With respect to von Brentano's desire to establish diplomatic relations and conclude non-aggression pacts with Poland and Czechoslovakia, he told me that domestic political considerations had been the determining factor with the Chancellor and the latter had refused to go along with the Foreign Office recommendations. He himself was still keen to go ahead and hoped that possibly we would lend our influence in this direction. I told him that while I felt that such a move would be a desirable one, I did not think that it was a matter that we could raise unless the Chancellor took the initiative because of its domestic political implications in Germany. Von Brentano had explained that there were approximately ten million refugees from Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany in Germany and that any move toward agreement with Poland and Czechoslovakia would be an indication on the part of the Federal Government that that Government had abandoned any hope of restoring these refugees to their original homesteads.

On the matter of a long-range settlement for Berlin, von Brentano was more forthcoming than he had been in Geneva. He was very frank in saying that he believed the relationship between West Germany and East Germany could be settled if it were not for the emotional problems involved in a settlement of the Berlin question. He likewise repeated what we had earlier been led to believe was the Chancellor's position, namely, that the West German Government would not wish to enter into any agreement regarding Berlin which in any way weakened West Germany or involved moves tending toward neutralization of West Germany. In other words, West Germany would not wish to make any sacrifice in connection with a Berlin settlement.

Von Brentano

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Von Brentano then went on to say that he felt that if we could get a moratorium for three years, which would carry through the next German elections, and in the interim period begin to work out some status for Berlin which the Berliners as well as the Russians might accept, this would be a desirable thing. He envisaged some kind of free or guaranteed city with U.N. responsibility made an important element in the settlement. I told him that I thought it was very important for the President to get the Chancellor's thinking on this whole subject, if possible before the Khrushchev visit, and von Brentano said he would try to get this delineated as thoroughly as possible the next day before the Chancellor returned to Italy and then write me a personal and confidential letter on the subject.

Von Brentano volunteered that he felt it of the greatest importance that Anglo-German difficulties should be patched up and that he would be urging the Chancellor in the strongest terms to pay a visit to England before mid-September.

C A H.
Christian A. Herter

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